

have been efforts at more comprehensive legislation that all include some variation of this bill as an enticement for passage. The pressure from our legislation has in fact encouraged some within the Postal Service to make significant progress. I've met with members of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service, the Postal Rate Commissioners, and the National League of Postmasters, and they have made progress. There are outstanding examples of where they have worked with the local community to make the post office an integral part of a downtown or main street.

It is time, however, to make this relationship something that every community can count on. It is time to make this relationship part of the Postal Service's regular activities. It should not be an exception, it should not require luck or extraordinary political action, and there should be no variation in the commitment to providing the finest examples of being a part of each and every community.

Last year, Congress failed on acting expeditiously to pass comprehensive postal legislation that included provisions from the Post Office Community Partnership Act. I am hopeful that this hesitation will not be repeated in the 109th Congress. Congress has the opportunity to set the tone for the Postal Service and federal government to become a full partner in the livability of our communities, leading by example so our families are safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

**INTRODUCTION OF H.J. RES. 30
AMENDING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION
TO GUARANTEE A RIGHT
TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE**

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleague, Congressman JESSE JACKSON Jr., to introduce an amendment to the US Constitution to guarantee health care as a right in this nation.

The current state of our health care system, if you want to call it a "system," is bleak. Yet, Congress and the White House continue to ignore the problems we face, or worse yet, offer ideological solutions that only exacerbate our current ills. Making changes to the tax code will do nothing to extend high-quality health care to the millions who are left outside of the system today. I am frustrated, as many Americans are, with the lack of leadership on this issue. This is why I have come back to an idea I had more than a decade ago—to force Congress to provide health care of equal high quality for all by guaranteeing this right in our Constitution.

The problems we see today are the same that have been with us for the past century. While some claim that the U.S. has the best health care system in the world, the high-tech medical technologies that are available to some in this country are out of reach to the 45 million uninsured—including eight million children—and millions more who are underinsured and cannot afford this care. Even when people do have health insurance, bare-bones policies with high out-of-pocket costs help force millions of families into bankruptcy each year. Access to "the best medical care

in the world" shouldn't be determined by your income tax bracket.

And for all the praise of the advanced medical technologies available in this country, high-tech does not necessarily equate to high quality. Although the U.S. spends far more than any other nation on medical care, we do not have the best health status. Studies have shown that overall Americans receive the recommended treatment only 50 percent of the time.

Inequities in our system are not only based on what people can afford or where they live. Perhaps the most disturbing finding in recent years is the disparities in access, treatment, and outcomes that exist for people of color. It is unconscionable that the quality of health care may be determined by skin color, rather than need or proven medical practice.

An individual's health is the key to their ability to achieve the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that this nation was founded on. To ensure these rights are conferred, we must be certain that everyone—regardless of their income, race, education, or job status—can access health care of equal, high quality. Today, only prisoners in the U.S. enjoy this right.

Other countries—both developed and undeveloped—recognize the importance of health care and have guaranteed the right to health care through their constitutions, including Afghanistan, the European Union, Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Somali, and South Africa. Even the provisional constitution of Iraq—written in part by the current Bush Administration—guarantees health care as a right. It is shameful that the U.S., the shining example of prosperity and democracy throughout the world, still leaves so many people on their own when it comes to health care.

For more than 30 years I have served in this body as an advocate for health care for all people. Unfortunately, time and time again I have seen efforts to expand and improve access to health care squashed under the weight of special interests protecting their individual fiefdoms. I firmly believe that until all people have an equal right to high-quality health care guaranteed through the Constitution, their interests will continue to be ignored as those who profit off the existing system maintain their opposition to reform. It's time for a grassroots movement to put the interests of the people first! I look forward to working with the advocacy community to make the shared vision of quality health care for all a reality.

On a final note, I am introducing this amendment today to extend a specific right to all people, which is the purpose of such amendments. Unfortunately, this Congress is likely to consider other amendments to our Constitution that will remove rights and codify discrimination against certain groups of people. Our Nation's most sacred document must never be amended to set aside certain rights for select groups, while barring others from ever realizing these rights. I can only hope that my colleagues take their responsibility to protect equal rights for all people in our democracy as seriously as I do.

**BROADCAST DECENCY
ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2005**

SPEECH OF

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2005

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, on February 16, 2005, the House approved H.R. 310, the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act of 2005. It passed the House by a vote of 389 to 38 and had 67 cosponsors when it was considered by the House. Due to a failure to convey in timely fashion a co-sponsorship request from my staff to the bill's sponsor, Chairman FRED UPTON, our colleague Representative GENE TAYLOR (D-MS) was not listed as one of the cosponsors prior to the bill's passage through the House. Representative TAYLOR has been a strong supporter of the bill, and was a cosponsor of the identical legislative effort in the last Congress. I am pleased to have his ardent support for H.R. 310. And I want the RECORD to reflect his intention to be a cosponsor, as well as his early and longstanding support for the public interest in broadcasting and adequate enforcement tools for the Federal Communications Commission.

**50TH ANNIVERSARY OF JEMEZ
SPRINGS**

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Jemez Springs, New Mexico on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. The citizens of Jemez Springs celebrated its golden anniversary this past weekend with games, food and a chili cook-off in the Jemez Village Park.

I want to offer my sincere congratulations to Mayor John Garcia and all the residents of Jemez Springs on this historic occasion.

Incorporated in 1955, Jemez Springs' caring citizens, diligent community leaders, superior schools, and growing economy have made for an exceptional and unique civic life for its citizens.

Located in the Jemez River canyon, Jemez Springs is nestled amid the high, volcanically layered mesa walls of the Jemez Mountains. The Village is located along Highway 4, the Jemez Mountain Trail. This scenic route has been designated as a National Scenic Byway, an honor given to only 55 routes in the Nation, historic NM 4, and is the main downtown road. There you can find restaurants, galleries, a natural springs bathhouse and several bed and breakfast inns. Horseback tours, cross country skiing and snowshoeing trips are available.

Native Americans inhabited the area as long ago as the 14th century. These were probably the ancestors of the current residents of nearby Jemez Pueblo. The community of Jemez Springs dates from the 19th century. It was originally known as "Hot Springs" and provided services for area ranchers. Today, the community is still best known for its hot springs which are warmed by geothermal activity beneath the Jemez Mountains. The principal industries in the area are tourism and forestry.